

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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2. **Active leading of worship**—with proper time for preparation—on the training days and in home parishes, all with detailed feedback. Participants also had opportunity to lead parts such as ‘the opening of a service’, ‘introducing and reading a lesson’, prayers, drama, creative ideas, and music, all with feedback from a tutor.
3. **Input and challenge**—John’s story above shows that there were elements to be taught, but this was achieved by no more than two 10-minute teaching spots each Saturday, plus some handouts for use in preparing worship, and by debriefing, especially about what made the worship go well. We offered the challenge of looking at contentious issues, which was requested by participants. The language we use for God and for human beings raised issues that seemed new to some participants. It may have been helpful that the course tutors (one man and two women) spanned the age range from early twenties to early sixties.

A second course is now underway with a different team of tutors. We find that this course fills up rapidly!

If any reader of *News of Liturgy* is interested in finding out more about this Course for Lay Worship Leaders you are welcome to contact Rev Michael Allen at Dunham House, Westgate, Southwell, Notts, NG25 0JL (tel 01636-814504). Copies of the course, programmes, and handouts are available from Michael, price £2.

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EDITORIAL

The new *Initiation Services* for the post-2000 *Common Worship* era are published on 26 March, just in time for their official start on 11 April. In one sense they are not quite definitive—not only have verbal infelicities been discovered and smoothed since authorization in Synod in November, but the Lord’s Prayer (to take a glaring example of provisionality) is only printed in ‘modified traditional’ form. This is simply because it is impossible to pre-judge the text of the modern form, until the Revision Committee and the Synod have decided it. There may also be other points of standardization with other rites to come.

Michael Vasey and I (after some hard work) have produced last month’s Grove Worship Series booklet No 145 as a commentary and guide to accompany the new rites. I want here not to reproduce anything set out in depth in that booklet, but to draw attention to a matter which has been the subject of some discussion when I have visited deanery chapters here in my own Area.

I have been highlighting two issues which, though not mentioned in the ASB rites, have gained rubrical recognition in the new ones. Both represent an informalization of the rites, a greater emergence of the ‘human face’ within the celebration. I refer to sponsors for adult candidates and to the use of testimony.

Sponsors, properly understood, represent something far beyond the formal. They should be walking the period of preparation with their own candidate. They may be chosen through a conversation between leaders and candidate; but the crucial point is that they then become the way in which the candidates are assimilated into local church life, and begin to experience the sense that the church of Christ is an organic unity. The whole concept has been worked through for Anglicans in *On the Way*, the report of three years ago. Ideally, sponsors should present candidates for prayer in the congregation as they begin their preparation course, should attend the sessions with them, should bring them before the congregation again on the Sunday prior to the confirmation, and should literally present them—to the congregation and to the bishop—at the actual confirmation (I recommend their standing to the right of kneeling candidates, with a left hand on the right shoulder of the one each is presenting, and then introducing them orally by name). After confirmation candidates and sponsors should reflect together on the significance of the event—and on the growth that is sought through the whole pattern, and on the path of active discipleship ahead.

Testimony is mentioned specifically in the rubrics within the ministry of the word—and it was recommended by the liturgy group at the last Lambeth

Conference as a proper feature of adult baptisms and confirmations. There is also opportunity for a short word at the very point of baptism: as the candidate enters the water (or undergoes a less dramatic wetting) he or she is asked 'Is this your faith?' and the reply can be in extemporaneous words. In my experience, this can be very real and very powerful, and need not be confined to Baptists... However, there is also a strong case for having 20-50 words from each candidate in *written* form, words which are then edited into the service booklet used on the occasion. As a preacher at baptisms and confirmations, I say with heartfelt candour that such writings are extremely helpful to a preacher.

Not all the parish clergy have been proving equally enthusiastic. They are fearful on behalf of the less articulate, lest they become marginalized or made into second-class candidates—and, obviously, no-one wants glib triumphalism or strident success-stories to distort the liturgy. Such efforts are not only unattractive in themselves, but are very disconcerting to other candidates. But that is a pastoral issue—it is one which faces a preacher anyway, for candidates have been led by God down such very different paths that mutual acceptance is an important part of the preparation. And no-one, surely, is going to pretend that the cradle-Christian who has been believing for 18 years, and has rarely doubted and never strayed, should somehow be outclassed or marginalized by someone else of twice the age, who has had a very good crack at the dark paths of sin, and has now got caught by Christ on a Damascus Road? God forbid.

But what has also emerged is that the two features above may actually overlap helpfully with each other. For testimony, can a sympathetic and kindly sponsor interview a neophyte with a few well-chosen questions? Or for written stories, can a sponsor help a candidate find the right words for his or her own account? And in the rite, can a sponsor give confidence to a nervous or unconfident convert? The new rites, as well as the thrust of *On the Way*, give every encouragement in this sort of direction. And, whilst all my years in the Medway I largely forebore to bore my readers with my personal parochial learning curve (or at least I kid myself that that was so), I do here write out of some personal parish-based experience, hammered out in a far-from-intellectual parish context.

Colin Buchanan

PS:I revert to the practice of *NOL* when the *ASB* came out—I offer prizes for spotting 'true errors' in the publishing of the new rites. A 'true error' is one committed in production. An 'authorized error' is a mistake or inconsistency in the text that went through Synod and is therefore *not* an error, but an authorized text! The fiddling at production, mentioned above, which has corrected an authorized error, will have to be dubbed an 'unauthorized truth'—and minor prizes will go to those who report them. ('How much?' do I hear the avaricious saying? Ah, true errors collect £2, unauthorized truths 50p. That should check your avarice.)

Each course day had specific teaching and activities—it was always stimulating and very busy. The design of worship and the key elements of worship were thoroughly covered, yet opportunities for variety and innovations such as drama were put forward and tried out. Key elements to remember included the importance of silence, a time for reflection and response, music, explanation, drama and allowing God to 'speak'.

We worked at everyone's needs in All-Age Worship, and we explored worship as Pastoral Care and Mission—always by designing worship together. We began to look hard at contentious issues such as inclusive language, hymns, and team leading.

It became clear (not by teaching or practice, but by considering the meaning of worship over a period of time) that the personality of leaders is important, and their reactions during the service are conveyed to the congregation. Therefore it is essential for leaders to be themselves, and to know their own skills and weaknesses. Body language, a smile, pace and clarity convey so much.'

Michael Allen, who was a tutor on the first course, and who is a member of the Diocesan Liturgical Committee, gives us

A Trainer's Viewpoint:

'This was a group of people very well motivated to become better at leading worship. One half had already led worship, some as Readers; others were just beginning to do a little more than read a lesson. Their application forms showed that they were looking for more skills, creativity, and confidence at 'hands on' leading. This, together with an understanding of how adults learn, led to three key elements:

1. **Feedback**—which is crucial to development. The trainers led the first worship of the course, and encouraged participants to review the worship and the way it was led, using yardsticks they had put together themselves. Thus everyone—trainers and participants—had to be open to feedback.

A significant point was reached when course members reviewed a particular act of worship. The review covered helpful and unhelpful aspects of the worship; but when the leader of the service and the preacher joined the group, participants found it difficult to express anything that was unhelpful. On the next course day, when we talked through our fears of hurting people and of not making ourselves understood, the group was released into a deeper, more 'helpful for learning' way of giving and receiving feedback. Participants continually said that 'they don't get any real feedback in the local church.'

HOW DO WE CONTINUE ASB SERVICES AFTER 2000?

So far, despite targetting the pundit lawyers, I have no comprehensible or reportable answer to my questions. I have written again to all concerned, and here is part of my letter.

...However, before coming to the Measure, let me draw attention to the extreme improbability on *a priori* grounds that any such loophole for legislation would ever have been, or was, left in the text of the Measure. There are three...:

1. The Alternative Services Measure 1965 arose from 18 years negotiation after the report of the Canon Law Committee came out in 1947. It was exactly the role of the House of Laity watchdogs then to ensure that no unchecked powers remained to the bishops on their own—the very situation which had run since 1929, the situation the new legislation was to cure. I enclose a cutting from Hugh Craig's description of those years, and you will see the intense care taken to close all loopholes. I concede that the Worship and Doctrine Measure came on after the ASM, but the same watchdogs were still there watching (and I sat through the debates myself), and the coming of the GS was to give the H/L *more* control of what occurred...
2. There were also watchdogs in Parliament, with a very strong sense that they were there to safeguard the rights of the laity against the arbitrary impositions of the bishops. I recognize that the present draft Canon hardly has that character, but if there is a loophole *anywhere* in the Measure which allows *this* Canon, then that same loophole will also allow other Canons which give 'approval, amendment... or discontinuance' to forms of service simply on the episcopal say-so, as 'continuance' is grouped equally with these...
3. There were big problems around the time of the introduction of the ASB in 1980 as to the very point before us now—particularly re 'continuance' of Series 1, 2 and 3 booklets, many of which were entrenched in parishes. Nevertheless, amid all the devices and bright ideas for keeping booklets going without either raising controversy or giving them status equal with the ASB, no-one ever came up with the proposal in the new draft Canon. It was not even aired as a possibility—everyone then *knew* that authorization of alternative services (including 'continuance') could only be done by concurrence of three Houses in Synod.

Such are my *a priori* preambuling comments. Now I come to the text...

I then argue as in February NOL. The nearest to an answer I have so far is (in effect) the happy insistence by one ecclesiastical lawyer that the commandment which forbids murder does *not* forbid adultery, which may therefore be OK.

because when your people rejected your will,
you called them to return to your ways,
by filling the prophets with your Holy Spirit,
to be witnesses to your righteousness and power.
With the words that the prophet Isaiah heard in the temple,
we join with the angels and archangels,
and all the host of heaven,
praising you forever, and saying,

Holy, Holy, Holy...

Blessed is he who comes...

We give you thanks, O loving father,
for you sent your Son,
to be born as man,
to show us your likeness,
and to save people of all nations,
by dying for our sake on the cross.
On the same night that he was betrayed he took bread
and, after giving you thanks, he broke it
and gave it to his disciples saying,
'Take, eat, this is my Body
which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way, when they had eaten,
he took the cup; and after giving you thanks,
he gave it to them saying,
'Drink this all of you,
for this is my blood of the new Covenant,
which is shed for you and for many,
for the forgiveness of sins;
do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

We give you thanks, because you fulfilled his promise,
by sending us the Helper, the Holy Spirit,
so that the Good News of your love
might be known to all throughout the whole world.
And now, as we do this in remembrance of Jesus,
grant, by the power of your Spirit,

THE LITURGICAL SPELLCHECK

I was singing the opening hymn from a duplicated service sheet at a recent confirmation and found myself confronting this line at the beginning of the second verse:

‘God roulette on high’

Enquiry revealed that someone had not only consulted the spellcheck, but *had taken its advice*. So what has *your* spellcheck suggested?

COB

That December Joint Liturgical Study...

...is now available—64 pages in all: *Anglican Orders and Ordinations: the Jarvenpää Papers* edited by David Holeton.

...and next month’s publication is

Worship Series No 146, *The Spirit and Liturgy* by Jeremy Fletcher and Chris Cocksworth.

LITURGY IN THE CONGO

We have received from our correspondent in the Congo (previously Zaire) an English-language eucharistic liturgy designed for the Province and to be translated into vernacular languages (and, presumably, French). There are two eucharistic prayers, and the first of these is printed below. In the original it includes asterisked provision for *five* manual acts during the narrative of the institution, ie including the breaking of the bread (shades of 1662—perhaps not surprising in many parts of Africa).

The Lord be with you

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is good and right so to do.

Indeed, it is our joy to thank you,

O heavenly Father, for you created all things:

the stars, sun, moon and this world;

hill and valley, forest and field, river and lake,

and all that dwell in them.

You created human beings,

making them more intelligent and powerful than all the animals;

and you chose one nation to know more of you.

We give you thanks,

WHAT IS BEING DONE ABOUT THE PSALTER?

(The above title headed a letter from Canon Jane Sinclair in Church Times on 23 January; a letter of some significance in the light of the letter in December from the Cambridge hebraists. We published it in February. The hebraists themselves—with David Frost making a Trio—respond again)

Sir,

We are grateful for Canon Sinclair’s reply of 23 January [published in *NOL* February] in which she names the ‘group of biblical scholars from Cambridge’ who checked the Liturgical Commission’s revision of the ECUSA Psalter. They were students at Westcott House. We note she regards it as ‘regrettable’ that the reference to them ‘has been a cause of misunderstanding and offence, when neither was intended’. We accept, of course, that there was no intention to mislead, but the words were nevertheless misleading. The reader would naturally suppose that the biblical scholars were people appointed by Cambridge University to teach the Bible, not students of Westcott House (two of whom we know to have attended elementary Hebrew classes only within the last three years). We do not blame the group themselves, who doubtless sought to do conscientiously what they had been asked to do. The fault lies rather with those who asked them. It is impossible to understand how anyone with real knowledge of the problems of translating the Hebrew text could suppose that such a group was qualified to check the translation.

Canon Sinclair’s letter mentions two other names, though not of members of the group that checked the translation. Our friend Canon Sweet is a New Testament scholar who can read Hebrew, but we do not suppose that he would claim to be a Hebrew specialist. Mr John Eaton, however, is a competent Hebraist whose views on the Psalter deserve to be taken seriously, though some of them are controversial. It is not clear what part he played in the work. In any case, where translation of the Hebrew text is concerned, experience has shown that the work is best done by a team of scholars, not just one person.

The whole method of dealing with the Psalter seems to have been at fault. It is simply unsatisfactory for those who are not Hebrew scholars to take it upon themselves to revise the ECUSA Psalter and then to have their work checked by students. This is not compatible with their stress on ‘fidelity to the Hebrew Text’ or with their judgement on ‘accuracy of translation’. The Liturgical Commission may not wish to recommend the continued use of the Liturgical Psalter, but they have a duty to the Church to see that the proposed replacement is as thoroughly prepared by a group of adequately qualified scholars.

Yours sincerely

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CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Bishop Colin

You may very well be right to identify *Saeptus Officio* as the origin of what you call 'Set before' terminology (*NOL* No 277, Editorial), but you totally misrepresent its archiepiscopal authors. They are clear about what the eucharistic sacrifice consists in, and it is different from the doctrine you attribute to them.

They claim that Anglicans truly teach this doctrine, and they describe it without offending Cranmer's theology. First, the sacrifice of thanks and praise; second, the 'setting forth' of the sacrifice of the cross; third, the sacrifice of ourselves; they conclude '*This whole action...we are accustomed to call the eucharistic sacrifice.*'

Returning to the Latin itself, I doubt that your translation is the only reasonable one. Maybe *proponere* and *praesentare* are merely synonyms for the leading verb *offerire* as style dictates, but it's more than that.

Proponere can mean many things, amongst them: to point out, declare, represent, report, say. What the authors imply is that the sacrifice of the cross is thoroughly exposed in Cranmer's rite, and is therefore 'pleaded' before the Father. We might join with others in translating it 'Then next we plead and represent before the Father the sacrifice of the cross.'

I'm not sure this adds to the serious substance of your theme; but I am worried both when good archbishops of blessed memory are wrongfully accused, and when Latin is translated badly.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Boardman

Catford and Devonham, Woolwich Episcopal Area
[The editor hopes to reply...]

Dear Colin,

Sue and I were interested to hear you talking on Radio 4 about the new Lord's Prayer the other day. The Bishop of Norwich must be living in some rarefied atmosphere that certainly doesn't percolate down to the traditional rural areas in which I have spent nearly all my ministry. I'm absolutely convinced from my own experience that you are right in saying that *most* non-church go-ers do NOT know the Lord's Prayer. I experience this at weddings, funerals, baptisms, thanksgivings, school services etc etc. In rural areas like ours most Primary schools are church schools and the Lord's Prayer (usually in the traditional form) is taught and practised. But even in our local church secondary school most have forgotten it before they leave, because it is not reinforced by constant repetition. If not forgotten at that stage, it's forgotten soon after they leave school.

Yours

David Greene
Thornford, near Sherborne

Dear Colin

I have been working on the Acorn version of *Visual Liturgy* and have just completed the work on the *Revised Common Lectionary* and have a number of observations to make that may be of interest to readers of *NOL*, some of which are amusing and others are simply puzzling. I am trying to highlight specific things rather than general comments.

1. Why did the Year C Epiphany Principal OT reading begin with the last verse of Ezekiel 43?
2. On two occasions, at least, the optional shorter Psalm is just one verse shorter! (C-Principal Proper 14 Related & C-Principal Third Sunday before Advent).
3. On one occasion the shorter option for a Psalm is identical with what is set in the first place! (A -Principal Related—Proper 19)
4. How can the OT readings during Ordinary Time in Year C be remotely called 'continuous'? (Proper 4—1 Kings 18; Proper 5—1 Kings 17; Proper 6—1 Kings 21; Proper 7—1 Kings 19 followed by two Sundays each on 2 Kings, Amos and Hosea and Isaiah)
5. The Table of Readings for Bible Sunday on page 89 of *The Christian Year* gives no indication as to when it could be celebrated! For that information one has to turn to *The Christian Year—Advent 1997 to Advent 1998* where we learn it may be celebrated on the Last Sunday after Trinity.
6. Further on Bible Sunday in Year B—there is no optional Gospel reading for the Second Service but two Gospel readings to choose from for the Third Service!
7. In the Year C Principal Service readings—the sequence on Galatians (Propers 4-9) completely misses out Chapter 4.
8. In *The Christian Year* (page 63) the choices for reading Hebrews as the Epistle reading for the Third Service appear to be identical, yet are set out differently in Year A from Years B and C, and why bother with different sets of readings anyway—the only actual variation is a different Gospel is set for the Second Service of Year A!
9. With the readings for the Easter Vigil the only change from one Year to the next is the Gospel Reading despite the fact that all the lessons are printed out for each year.
10. Finally, if we stick to the Lectionary we shall never have to preach on any of the Bible passages that may be held to refer to homosexuality (Lev 18.22; 20.13; Deut 23.17-18; Rom 1.18-32; 1 Cor 6.9-10; 1 Tim 1.8-11; Jude 7).

Readers may like to know that the Acorn version of *Visual Liturgy* allows one to find where in the Lectionary Bible passages occur, something the PC version can't do!

Yours

Colin Randall
Hanborough and Freeland